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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [UNSC](#) [AG](#) [MO](#) [WI](#)
SUBJECT: ALGERIANS IN NEW YORK OBJECT TO VAN WALSUM
INITIATIVE, MOROCCAN AUTONOMY PLAN

Classified By: Amb. John Bolton. E.O. 12958. Reasons 1.4 (b/d)

¶1. (C) Summary: Algerian PR Youcef Yousfi March 22 conveyed Algeria's objections to Personal Envoy for Western Sahara Peter van Walsum's proposal that Algeria participate as a party in negotiations with Morocco on the issue of Western Sahara and to a presumed forthcoming Moroccan autonomy proposal that rules out self-determination for the Sahrawi. These points, made in a late February letter from President Bouteflika to Secretary-General Annan, have also been conveyed to every Security Council member. Ambassador Bolton said that van Walsum's proposal was an attempt to break a stalemate wherein Morocco remains satisfied, and the Polisario and Algeria unsatisfied, with the status quo. Encouraging Algerian flexibility, Ambassador Bolton said the U.S. continues to support the efforts of the Personal Envoy, is open as to what action the Security Council may take in the future, and awaits a substantive Moroccan plan and the Polisario response to it. End Summary.

Algeria's Concerns; Bouteflika's Letter

¶2. (C) In a March 22 meeting he requested with Ambassador Bolton to discuss the Western Sahara, Algerian PR Youcef Yousfi said Algeria is concerned that the Secretary-General's Personal Envoy for Western Sahara has chosen to ignore fifteen years of Security Council efforts and advocate a political process based only on the principle of autonomy, a process that ignores the principle of self-determination for the Palestinian people. He said that Algeria has also learned that Morocco plans to present a plan for autonomy for the Western Saharans that does not include Western Saharan sovereignty over the territory. Finally Algeria has heard that Personal Envoy Peter van Walsum has advocated the idea of direct Algerian negotiations with Morocco on the Western Sahara issue.

¶3. (C) Ambassador Yousfi said that Algerian President Bouteflika had recently written a letter to Secretary-General Annan. (Note: The letter, personally delivered on late February to Annan by Algerian Minister Delegate for the Maghreb Abdelkader Messahel, has not been made public. End Note.) Yousfi, summarized the main points of the letter:

History will remember that it was during the tenure of the Secretary-General that the Baker Plan offered a way to break

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through the thirty year deadlock in the Western Sahara in a manner characterized by realism, justice and legality.

Algeria has been surprised to learn of a proposal for Algeria to participate in direct negotiations with Morocco in a manner that would consecrate a pre-determined autonomy for the Western Sahara in the name of "realpolitik," but would, in fact, be at variance with international legality and the rights of the Western Saharans.

Algeria refuses to be considered a party to the conflict and to negotiate with Morocco in place of the people of Western Sahara; any kind of negotiation to find a solution should be conducted between the two parties (Morocco and Polisario) only.

There is no reason for Algeria to be associated with such a negotiation: Algeria has nothing to claim and nothing to give.

¶4. (C) Yousfi told Ambassador Bolton that he has seen the representatives of the every Security Council member to convey a similar message. One, a P-5 PR very close to the U.S., told Yousfi that he had informed Personal Envoy van Walsum twice already that any plan van Walsum brings to the Security Council should have the support of the Polisario and the non-objection of Algeria.

Van Walsum's Frustration, Moroccan Satisfaction, Algerian Flexibility

¶5. (C) Ambassador Bolton thanked Yousfi for his presentation of Algeria's views on Western Sahara. Ambassador Bolton said that he saw van Walsum's initiative as a reflection of his frustration with a status quo in which Morocco will not accept a referendum involving self-determination. The current stalemate, Ambassador Bolton said, is very satisfactory to Morocco -- they control the territory, have not had a referendum and no one will force them to have one. It is not satisfactory for the Sahrawi, who are in refugee camps in Tindouf, and it cannot be satisfactory for Algeria, on whose land the refugees live and for whom borders are a constant source of concern. One has to give credit to van Walsum for trying to break the status quo. Otherwise, Morocco will continue to settle more and more people in the territory, reinforce its control of the territory, and begin to exploit mineral rights and fishing rights there. Then, possession being nine points of the law, the international community will come to accept Western Sahara as part of Morocco. Ambassador Bolton added that in our discussions with Moroccan officials we have said that any autonomy plan that they might offer should be a substantial and genuine plan, not one to be treated as a starting point for negotiations.

¶6. (C) Ambassador Yousfi asked what the Security Council might do if the Moroccans offer an autonomy plan and the Polisario, as would be expected, rejects it. In such an eventuality, Yousfi asked, would the Security Council consider imposing a solution? He reiterated Algeria's position that it would not follow a "realpolitik" policy and said that as the status quo continues, the unhappiness to which the Polisario must respond will increase, forcing its leadership to find a way to express its opinions. Ambassador Yousfi said that for the past fifteen years, Algeria has sought to improve relations with Morocco while preferring that the UN solve the problem of Western Sahara. Yet some months ago Morocco had canceled the scheduled visit of the Algerian Prime Minister. Some people in Algeria believe that there cannot be any improvement in the bilateral relationship until the problem of Western Sahara is solved. Moreover, the longer it drags on, the more difficult it will be to solve.

¶7. (C) Ambassador Bolton said that he had earlier suggested that if there continued to be no agreement, the Security Council should consider whether MINURSO had outlived its usefulness. Analytically, he said, we remain flexible and open to suggestions. He said the position of the U.S. government is to support the work of the Personal Envoy. Ambassador Bolton said that his personal wish is that the Western Sahara problem be solved, but that it is a problem

that cannot be solved until the status quo is broken. Ambassador Bolton said that he is curious to see how the Polisario will react to the Moroccan plan. He said that the Polisario have been restrained for some time. Commenting on the need for flexibility and Algeria's reluctance to participate in Western Sahara negotiations, Ambassador Bolton recalled that when former Personal Envoy Baker worked the issue, Algeria and Mauritania were present at the discussions not as parties but as interested observers.

BOLTON